



# NACOP NOTES

September 2009

## NACOP 2009-2010



### Council Representatives:

Mary Dailey (BA)  
Drusilla Fratesi, Ex-Officio (MSA)  
Sandy Groneberg, Jr. Co-Chair (MWA)  
LaTasha Burl, Webmaster (NAL)  
Deborah Penick (PWA)  
Wanda Rohrer, Recorder (SAA)  
Sherry Dewald, Historian (SPA)  
Diane Koch (NAA)  
Diona Austill, Sr. Co-Chair (NPA)  
Jackie Kelly, NACOP Notes Editor (HQ)  
Cathy Lonaberger, Technical Advisor

### Not pictured:

Rhonda Sampson, Technical Advisor

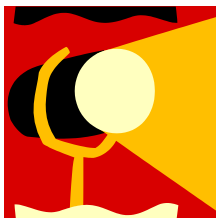
### Message from the Co-Chairs

By: Diona Austill, Sr. Co-Chair, NPA  
Sandy Groneberg, Jr. Co-Chair, MWA

With fall upon us, we move into that time of year when the weather settles down and we start to get ready for the holidays. Beautiful colors appear and aromas entice us to the kitchen. We hope that each of you will take time to enjoy your holidays. One thing we need to do is make sure we leave work at work and enjoy life at home with those we love. Someone once said to pick a spot on your way home from work and dump your work cares and worries there and pick them back up when you go back to work. This is not an easy task as there are still those times when one wakes up in the middle of the night with a solution to a problem that has been troubling them. For the most part though, if you consciously do this, maybe your life will be a little less stressful. Life is too short to live it all for work. We hope this newsletter gives you some ideas to assist you through the next few months.

NACOP – National Advisory Council for Office Professionals

<http://www.npstaff.ars.usda.gov/nacop/index.htm>



## South Atlantic Area (SAA) Advisory Council of Office Professionals

By: Wanda Rohrer

The South Atlantic Area Advisory Council of Office Professionals was organized in late 1994-early 1995, Area Director, Dr. Mary Carter, selected several secretaries to serve on the South Atlantic Area-Secretarial Advisory Council (SAA-SAC). On February 28, 1995, the SAA-SAC held its first meeting in conjunction with the Research Leaders and Administrative Officers meeting, Gainesville, FL. During the first meeting the Mission and Goals and Charter were developed. The SAA-SAC Charter was signed by Council Members and approved by Dr. Carter, March 1995.

### VISION

Our vision is to serve as a foundation to the South Atlantic Area office professionals to enhance self awareness, strengthen skills and provide leadership.

### Our accomplishments from past and present include:

- Presentation of Secretary of the Year Award
- Mentoring Program
- Scholarship Program
- Representation on SAA Leadership Conference and assisted with planning breakout sessions
- Membership Directory
- Annual Reports
- Webpage <http://www.ars.usda.gov/saa/acop> (currently under construction)
- Brochure
- Welcome Packet
- Newsletter
- Conference calls

- Hosted NACOP annual meeting in Athens, GA 2001 and again in Miami, FL 2009
- Our booth at 2003 National Conference won first prize for presentation of our research and product results
- Drafted Travel Desk Top Procedures, but was never distributed because of continual upgrades to GovTrip software
- SAA ACOP Strategic Plan 2009-2011

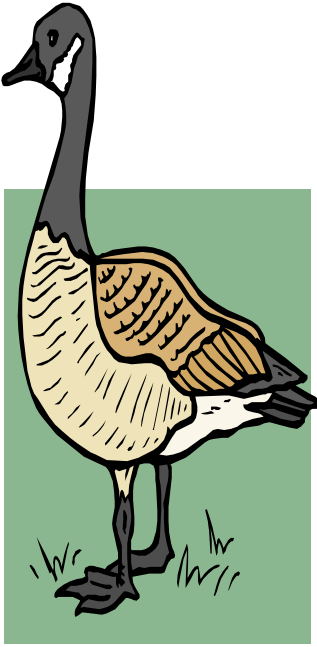
There are currently seven council members from the states: Georgia, South Carolina, and Florida; Deputy Area Director, (Sponsor), a Research Leader and Administrative Officer (technical advisors.)

### **Main Objectives**

- Improve communication and skills among office professionals and strengthen programs and opportunities for their career advancement.
- Provide advice and recommendations on agency-wide and SAA policies and programs related to the employment, development, and advancement of office professionals.
- Improve recognition of office professionals and promote professionalism within the occupation.
- Use orientation package of required and appropriate training and mentoring for office professionals.

Serve as “sounding board” for SAA Deputy Director, Research Leaders and Administrative Officers on new initiatives which impact employees across the Area, such as testing and implementing new software packages, automating administrative processes, and changing procedures.





## Gift of the Goose

**Contributed by: Wanda Rohrer, SAA**

Jan Lewis of the Cooperative Resolution Program presented a team building session during the annual meeting in Miami, FL on June 2, 2009. She showed a video entitled, “Gung Ho,” which demonstrated how teamwork helped a company increase its production. One of the lessons was called, the gift of the goose.

What can we as office professionals learn from a goose? When you see geese heading south for the winter flying along in a “V” formation, you might be interested in knowing what science has discovered about why they fly that way. As each bird flaps its wings, it creates uplift for the bird immediately following. By flying in a “V” formation, the whole flock adds at least 71% greater flying range than if each bird flew alone. People who share a common direction and sense of community can get where they’re going quicker and easier because they’re traveling on the thrust of one another.

Whenever a goose falls out of formation, it suddenly feels the drag and resistance of trying to fly alone and quickly gets back into formation. If we have as much sense as a goose, we’ll join in formation with those who are headed in our direction.

When the lead goose gets tired, it rotates into the formation and another goose flies at the point position. It pays to take turns doing the hard tasks and sharing leadership with people, as with geese, interdependent with one another.

Geese in formation honk from behind to encourage those up front to keep up their speed. We need to make sure our “honking” from behind is encouraging and not something less helpful.

When a goose gets sick or wounded or shot down, two geese drop out of formation and follow their fellow member down to help and provide protection. They stay with this member of the flock until it either is able to fly again or dies. Then they launch out on their own, team up with another formation, or catch up with their own flock. Are you as smart as a goose in your personal and working relationships?

The book name is “Gung Ho! Turn on the People in Any Organization” by Ken Blanchard and Sheldon Bowles, The Creators of Raving Fans, and is available anywhere books are sold. It is an easy, delightful, book to read.

## Your Attitude

Contributed by: Sherry Dewald, SPA

If you want to become a super secretary, you must train yourself in several areas:

1. *Accept criticism objectively.* Your employer is concerned with the error itself and calls attention to it so that it won't be made again. It is just as important for you to learn that something is wrong as to learn that it is right. As a matter of fact it is a good idea from time to time to make an analysis or inventory of your personal work habits. By doing this you can strengthen your weak points and eliminate any annoying mannerisms you may have developed.
2. *Acquire self-assurance.* Experience is an important ingredient in acquiring self-assurance, but the process can be accelerated. For example, when a crisis erupts in the office, remain calm. If you become excited, it causes others to become excited. Pause long enough to decide what would be the best thing to do in the situation. When the decision is made, get going.
3. *Develop flexibility.* Try new methods since change is essential if there is to be any growth. Be ready to adjust your usual schedule to the unexpected needs of the day. Change your work habits to fit the organization and schedule of your department and supervisor.
4. *Recognize differences.* Understand that others' opinions and attitudes may be right and yours may be wrong. Accept company procedures and policies even though you might think things should be done differently. You may not have all the facts!

5. *Be accurate.* Your job skills should be superior with work done correctly on the first try.
6. *Use discretion.* Keep confidential information to yourself and be discreet in interrupting others.
7. *Be proud.* Do your work well so that it pleases those for whom it is done. Take pride in your appearance so you will truly be an asset to the office.

## Are You Chronically Disorganized?

Tips from Diane Hatcher at

[www.OnlineOrganizing.com](http://www.OnlineOrganizing.com)

Contributed by: Sandy Groneberg

Chronically disorganized people often times are not prepared for meetings, have problems meeting deadlines, and can't finish projects that they start. They may feel that they have little control over their lives and are overwhelmed by the thought of addressing the issue. It takes discipline to attack the problem instead of avoiding it by working amid the disorganization.

The solution is to break old habits and establish new ones. Not only does one need to clean up the disorganization, but also create systems and solutions that save time and maintain organization. This will give a new sense of control in one's life.

### SOME SUGGESTIONS:

- COMMIT to putting in a few hours at a time to get organized
- Find an appropriate PLACE for each item
- Put papers and items in those places IMMEDIATELY when they are brought into the home or office
- Set up SYSTEMS that save time
- PURGE files, closets and drawers annually at a minimum
- Make a daily TO-DO list the night before

Postscript:

Information abounds on ways to get organized. The first step is to determine that one really wants to do something about the disorganized parts of his/her life. Once one decides an action that will help remedy the problem, it is important to make the commitment to spend time each day practicing the improved habit. Even though most of one's life may be organized, there is probably at least one part that can be improved. Good luck in finding that area and working on it!

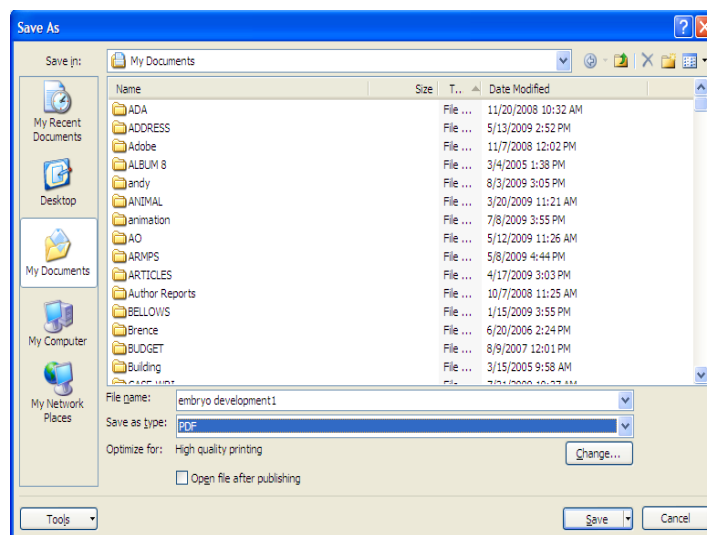
## Making Small Adobe® .pdf files with MS Publisher 2007®:

Contributed by: Diona Austill, NPA

For our Field Day this year, we made 24 very nice posters. We wanted to add them to our website but found that they were way too large for someone with a dial-up modem to download. After doing some research, we came up with the following for those using MS Publisher 2007®. First thing you need to do is go to the Microsoft website and download the patch for saving a file as a .pdf (<http://www.microsoft.com/downloads/details.aspx?FamilyID=f1fc413c-6d89-4f15-991b-63b07ba5f2e5&displaylang=en>). After you have the patch installed, then you can save your large Publisher files as small .pdf files.

1. Open your poster file in **Publisher**.
2. Click on the **File** menu and go to **Save As**
3. When the **Save As** dialogue box comes up, click on the **Save as Type** pull down menu and select **PDF**.
4. Select **Change**
5. Then select **Minimum Size** and **OK**. (there are other options you can play with too)
6. Next click on **Save** (be sure to name the file and choose where you want the file saved)

This should save the file as a small .pdf file. When you open it in Adobe®, you should be able to view it without much distortion. The .pdf files we have made range from 500 – 1200 kb which should work fine for people with dial-up to download.





## Articles: A versus An

### How do you know when to use the indefinite articles?

Contributed by: Jackie Kelly, HQ

"A" goes before all words that begin with consonants.

- a cat
- a dog
- a purple onion
- a buffalo
- a big apple

With one exception: Use "an" before unsounded h.

- an honorable peace
- an honest error

"An" goes before all words that begin with vowels:

- an apricot
- an egg
- an Indian
- an orbit
- an uprising

With two exceptions: When u makes the same sound as the y in you, or o makes the same sound as w in won, then a is used.

- a union
- a united front
- a unicorn
- a used napkin
- a U.S. ship
- a one-legged man

Note: The choice of article is actually based upon the phonetic (sound) quality of the first letter in a word, not on the orthographic (written) representation of the letter. If the first letter makes a vowel-type sound, you use "an"; if the first letter would make a consonant-type sound, you use "a." So, if you consider the rule from a phonetic perspective, there aren't any exceptions. Since the 'h' hasn't any phonetic representation, no audible sound, in the first exception, the sound that follows the article is a vowel; consequently, 'an' is used. In the second exception, the word-initial 'y' sound (unicorn) is actually a glide [j] phonetically, which has consonantal properties; consequently, it is treated as a consonant, requiring 'a'.

